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Fruits, Flowers & Floats:

Los Angeles Festivals of the 1890s

by Victoria Dailey

BEFORE HOLLYWOOD, AND DISNEYLAND; before skyscrapers and strip malls; before clogged freeways and air pollution, Los Angeles was a city unlike any other in the country. Festooned with flowers the year round and with orange groves and vineyards in the middle of town, Los Angeles enjoyed hundreds of sunny days per year and boasted vast acres in which nearly anything could grow. It was a city where prosperity was just around every corner, and where civic pride insured a tidy metropolis of beautiful homes with carefully tended gardens filled with roses, calla lilies, geraniums, heliotrope, jasmine, and tuberose, not to mention the ubiquitous orange tree, whose blossoms filled the air with delicious perfume. Add to this a new awareness of her Spanish past, a small population eager to grow, and a barrage of advertising, and you have the makings of the city that became the dream town of the country, the pot of gold at the end of the American rainbow. Los Angeles, the city and county of fruits and flowers, was advertised through a myriad of advertising brochures, photographs, and pinback buttons. Los Angeles became the destination of choice for traveling Americans and for those searching for a new place to settle down. All of this was spurred on by the completion of a direct route to Los Angeles from the east, when, on November 9, 1885, the first train pulled into town from Chicago.

Suddenly, eastern visitors could arrive in the Southland in just a few days and sample her enticements. Those ill with tuberculosis found a climate in which to recover. Those in perfect health found a place to increase their wealth. Southern California was just a train ride away—and the railroads capitalized on this new access. They, more than anything else, were responsible for the sudden growth and rapid development of the area, resulting in the “Boom of the Eighties.” As one observer recalled: “People were intoxicated with enthusiasm over the prospects of Los Angeles and the county. It is impossible to describe the excitement that reigned during this period.” [J. R. Henderson, “New Los Angeles,” in *The Californian Illustrated Magazine*, Vol. II, No. 5, October, 1892, p. 650]

The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe began a rate war with the Southern Pacific. Passenger fares from Chicago to L.A. dropped from \$125 to \$25; for a short time,

the fare fell to \$5; and for one extraordinary day, the fare was \$1. More than 200,000 visitors arrived in southern California in 1887, the peak year of the boom. Real estate prices skyrocketed as dozens of new towns sprang up with thousands of available home sites. In 1880, the population of Los Angeles was 11,000; by 1890, it had quintupled to 50,000. By 1900 it doubled, to 102,000. Advertising worked. Theodore Van Dyke recounted, in his classic book on the boom of the eighties, *Millionaires of a Day*, 1890: "The summer of 1886 was coming, and with it an increasing number of strangers. People who a year before had gone back [east] with contempt for everything in California, led by some strange impulse, were now every day returning and buying property at two or three times what they could have bought it for the year before... The success of some of these paper town-sites was wonderful. Thousands of acres bought [before the boom] for thirty, twenty, and even ten dollars an acre, and, without water for irrigation... were sold in lots at from one thousand to ten thousand dollars an acre. And this was done in dozens of places..."

Like any other boom, it promised more than it could deliver and the boom became a bust by late 1888. The city suffered a setback and real estate prices receded to pre-boom levels. No longer could inferior lots be sold to unsuspecting visitors at immense prices. The city recovered its senses and continued to grow, but not at the dizzying rate of the boom years. The bust did, however, become a public relations disaster when eastern newspapers exaggerated its effects, and the throngs of tourists who had descended during the boom failed to materialize during the bust years.

The Angel City's wings were clipped. Many hotel operators were worried, the city began to miss its tourist cash and so the city began to take inventory of herself. Improvements were needed to attract visitors once again to the new paradise on the Pacific. The city built a new sewer system. Streets, previously unpaved, underwent the transformation to blacktop. Construction of an electric cable car began in 1890. Businessmen joined together to form the Chamber of Commerce in 1888, and by 1894, that body had its own building, where it began exerting a wide influence, holding exhibitions of local products and issuing a multitude of brochures. The Chamber of Commerce was responsible for bringing thousands of settlers and tourists back to Southern California, and during 1888-91, it issued eight separate brochures with a total press run of 365,000 copies, boasting: "If it is true



that advertising pays, then the Chamber of Commerce has certainly done well by the section which it represents. It is generally admitted that no section of the United States is more thoroughly and intelligently advertised than Los Angeles and Southern California."

Advertising alone was not enough; it had to be supported by actual events. California's greatest agricultural product, citrus fruit, became the focus of promoters and planners. Oranges were the largest crop, and navel oranges the prize of all. Navels had first been grown in Riverside by Mrs. Eliza Tibbets in the 1870s, and the first commercial shipment was made in 1880, when 15 train cars loaded with 750,000 navels were sent east. By 1891, 1,446 carloads were required to ship 72 million oranges to outside markets – a dramatic hundred-fold increase in a decade.

To celebrate this incredible new business, local municipalities held Citrus Fairs from 1890 to 1895. The first fair, in Los Angeles, featured dainty exhibits of oranges and lemons grown around the Southland. Riverside, then the leading orange-growing district, made a sumptuous display at this first fair with orange pyramids of varying sizes.

Of the second fair, held in March, 1891 in Los Angeles, one writer said: "In no part of the world was [there] ever such a display of fruit... The symbolic and artistic design, the elaboration of details, and the delicate construction work point directly to inspiration... At this great exhibition of the citrus fruits of Southern California, fifty thousand oranges, lemons and limes were used in constructing the exhibits made by the horticulturists of fifteen different localities..." [J. R. Henderson, "New Los Angeles," in *The Californian Illustrated Magazine*, Vol. II, No. 5,

October, 1892, p. 645.] One of the most fanciful exhibits was the entry from San Diego – it featured a Spanish galleon sailing by the bluffs of Point Loma, the entire scene made exclusively from oranges. This fair of 1891 was subsequently sent to Chicago where it was renamed, for better marketing purposes, “The Orange Carnival,” and 120,000 people saw the bounties of Southern California on the shores of Lake Michigan, inducing many a Midwesterner to make the pilgrimage to the Pacific.

Citrus fairs became very popular, and major exhibits of fruit and other agricultural products were held not only in Los Angeles, but also around the country, including the 1893 World’s Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. California and her counties were big exhibitors in Chicago, and great care was taken in the massive and inventive displays. Among the featured exhibits were the Liberty Bell, complete with crack, made of oranges; and a medieval knight mounted on his gallant steed made from an unlikely source, prunes. Similar displays of California fruit appeared at the San Francisco Midwinter Fair of 1894; the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, 1895; the Trans-Mississippi Exposition in Omaha, 1898; and the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, 1901. California went national. Americans loved fairs, and California was the star of many of them.

Citrus fairs grew more elaborate each year and attracted more and more people. A visitor attempted to describe the effects of a typical citrus festival: “A citrus fair cannot be described in words, and, what is still more unfortunate, cannot be successfully pictured. The chief beauty of the display lies in the great masses of rich color in which the eye revels...But in the photograph the oranges look like so many cannon balls – all the soft effects of color are lost and there remains not even a remote suggestion of the beauty of the original.” (O[wen]. C[apelle]. “A Famous Festival” in *Land of Sunshine*, March, 1895, p.73.)

By the turn of the century, there were dozens of such fairs, including the Imperial Valley Cantaloupe Festival, the Redondo Beach Carnation Festival, the Blythe and El Centro Cotton Festival, the Oxnard Beet Festival, the Van Nuys Poppy Festival, Escondido Grape Festival and the Mecca Date Festival (still held every February). But Southern California did not consist of oranges and fruit alone – another major horticultural product existed in abundance – the varied and luxuriant flora, which became the centerpiece of other and even more elaborate festivals.

In 1889 the Chamber of Commerce entertained the idea of a festival based on

New Orleans' Mardi Gras, but nothing happened until 1893, when Max Meyberg, a pioneer merchant, dreamed up The Fiesta de Los Angeles in order to bring back tourists and settlers and to take advantage of the many visitors expected on the West Coast at the San Francisco 1894 Midwinter Fair. He imagined a huge celebration and ball for the spring of 1894, and his vision paid off. The Fiesta de Los Angeles opened on April 10 with 7,000 visitors and a parade down Spring Street. As a local newspaper reported: "No such gigantic social undertaking was ever attempted in this city before." It took place over four days, featuring a scenic and historical parade, which included such themed floats as The Landing of Cabrillo, The Old Missions, Early Mining Days, and two whimsical floats of more recent vintage: a Boom Float and a Busted-Boom Float. There was also a local industries parade and a children's parade; the final day, April 13, featured a Grand Masked Ball. The Fiesta reflected Los Angeles' growing civic pride, and it included entries from all community groups. In fact, this debut fiesta was the first occasion in Southern California in which the Chinese were invited to take part in a public celebration. They contributed an elegant float, and the Chinese entries soon became among the most popular at the Fiestas.

Because of its spectacular success, the Fiesta was held again in 1895, and was planned on a larger scale. A brochure proclaimed: "In April when La Fiesta is held, Winter has not yet thrown off its somber covering in many parts of the East, while the mountains and valleys of Southern California are clothed with all the daintiness of a fair bride. Her snow-capped mountain peaks look down upon luxuriant orange groves and smiling valleys. Turn, oh expectant subject, to the land of the Queen of the Angels in April, and enjoy her short, but merry reign. The gates of the city will be open to you!"

The Fiesta continued through the 1890s, but was canceled during the Spanish-American War. It was revived in 1901 when it was rechristened La Fiesta de las Flores. Los Angeles, and the Fiesta, had grown large enough and important enough for a state visit: President and Mrs. William McKinley were the guests of honor in 1901. Unforeseen and unimagined by Los Angeles fiesta goers that spring was that McKinley would die later that year at another fair. In September, while standing in a receiving line at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, McKinley was shot by an anarchist and he died eight days later.

Another official visit took place when President Theodore Roosevelt was the

guest of honor at the 1903 Fiesta. Many festivities were planned around Roosevelt's visit, and the menu for the banquet held in his honor at the Westminster Hotel included the following local delicacies: California Oyster Cocktail, San Fernando Mission Olives, Catalina Sand Dabs, La Crescenta Sherry, Sliced Cahuenga Tomatoes, Montalvo Potato Croquettes, Verdugo String Beans, La Jolla Shrimp Salad, Glendale Strawberries, and Sierra Cheese.

The next year, *Arrowhead Magazine*, a travel journal, reported that: "Flower festivals of Los Angeles have become famous the world over. The Fiesta of 1907 will eclipse all former events of the kind... Strangers to the state, who witness these festivals, wonder whence come all these flowers. There seems to be not a rose missing from the gardens. The calla lily hedges shine white with their multitudes of pure chalices. The banks glow with undespoiled masses of scarlet geraniums, and the great clustered bunches of heliotrope have lost none of their purple. It remains for the visitor to be driven about over the city and the surrounding country to comprehend that with the millions of acres of bloom in Southern California a dozen Fiestas could not exhaust nor perceptibly lessen the supply of flowers in this kingdom of bloom." Los Angeles in April was delirious with the perfume and magical effect of flowers.

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Parades and floats became more elaborate. In 1903, electric lights were first used on floats, and parades began to have themes, some of which included Nursery Rhymes, Folk Tales, Irrigation and, in 1912, the rather lofty theme, the Evolution of Aerial Navigation. This spectacular Fiesta of 1912, which took place over eight days, featured sixteen fanciful floats on the theme of flying and included entries in the shapes of a kite, comet, bee, eagle, firefly, stork, grasshopper, butterfly, flying fish, castle in the air, rocket and monoplane. Los Angeles had the distinction of having held the first international aviation meet in 1910 and Angelenos were enamored of all things aerial. This Fiesta also included a parade of twenty-one floats representing the Missions of California, each float a miniature reproduction in flowers of one of the Spanish missions built from San Diego to San Rafael. There was also a Grand Floral Parade, with florally bedecked automobiles, floats and carriages, and, just to dispel any thoughts that the planners had somehow skimmed, there was a Pageant of the Universality of Man, with floats dedicated to the following themes: Earth, North America, South America, Britannica, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia, followed by a flotilla of floral entries representing the cities of the West. The last day of this Fiesta featured Carnival Day, which offered a special experience of the Old West: a rodeo with cowboys and cowgirls. As the official brochure gushed: "Tie up your back hair, cinch down your sombrero, wear your wooden shoes; she's going to be hot. Hair-raising entry, nerve-disturbing fusillades, cow punchers galore in their element, cowgirls to the forefront, bucking horses in action, roping until you get dizzy, big band, all the regular trimmin's and something going on every minute." Who could resist Los Angeles?

The Fiestas continued up to World War I, but the city had grown so large, and her fame and reputation had spread so vastly, especially through the movies, that after the war, the Fiesta seemed like a quaint relic of the past and was discontinued. In 1931, the city held a Fiesta during the city's 150th anniversary celebration, but the Depression prevented its permanent revival. And Pasadena, home to the Rose Parade, had eclipsed Los Angeles as the premier floral festival of Southern California.

Pasadena, Los Angeles' neighbor to the northeast, had become home to the Rose Parade and Tournament of Roses mainly through the efforts of one settler, Charles Frederick Holder. Born in 1851 in Massachusetts, Holder had worked as a curator at New York's American Museum of Natural History before moving to Pasadena in 1885, just in time for the boom. A passionate naturalist throughout his

life and author of several books, he became known in Pasadena as a businessman, philanthropist, conservationist and sportsman. In 1886, he trained a pack of greyhounds to chase local fox, jackrabbits and coyotes – English-style hunting had come to Pasadena – and Holder helped found the exclusive Valley Hunt Club in 1888.

The following year, the Club held what it called a “beautiful fete” to show off their hounds and to celebrate the ripening of the oranges in the many local groves. The resulting event, originally called the Orange Parade, became the Pasadena Festival of Roses in 1890, now known as the Rose Parade. Following the Parade, young men competed in a variety of races, tugs of war, and jousts, which was named The Tournament of Roses by Holder and which evolved into the Rose Bowl. Holder was devoted to Pasadena, and described it in 1892 as follows: “The musical intonation of a distant mission bell, a soft balmy air, the odor of the orange blossom, a wealth of flowers, a crazy-quilt of color, the rustle of banana leaves as of gentle rain, the melody of birds on a midwinter day; the gleam of snow on distant mountains – this is Pasadena, the crown of the San Gabriel Valley...” (*The Californian*, Vol. II, p. 418)

Holder’s parade became so popular so quickly that in 1894, the city had to build viewing stands along the parade route, and that year marked the first floats entered by organizations, among them, the Valley Hunt Club and the Hotel Raymond. The Rose Parade had its first Rose Queen in 1905, and the popular January event spread the fame of Southern California’s mild winter climate to an amazed world. Unlike today, crowds then admired the use of one type of flower to decorate an entire float, car or carriage, and the massing of only calla lilies, roses, violets, pampas grass, nasturtiums, orange blossoms, wisteria or geraniums on an entry was especially prized.

Los Angeles and Pasadena were great agricultural and horticultural centers that attracted visitors the year round. They came to Southern California because it was unlike any other part of the country. While it was undoubtedly American, Southern California also had a touch of the exotic. Something subtle had changed in the minds and hearts of her many Yankee settlers. No longer rooted to an Anglo-Saxon past, Southern Californians reveled in their newly found Spanish and Mexican heritage. The local missions that were once looked upon as useless ruins from a Catholic past underwent restoration by a generation of Protestant Yankees who

began to prize them as a link to the imagined nobility and chivalry of a former time. Spanish and Mexican cooking became popular, as settlers, who formerly had never heard of a chili, began to eat enchiladas and tamales as a matter of course.

Whereas New England could take historic pride in Plymouth Rock and the Pilgrims, Southern California suddenly began to appreciate their ranchos, caballeros and missions – and no other metropolitan area could brag about blooming gardens in the middle of winter. Unlike other cities that developed over centuries, Los Angeles developed over a few decades – it had few of the signposts common to other urban centers – and it barely had a past.

Desperately in need of history, Los Angeles appropriated one. In dreaming up the Fiesta de Los Angeles, Angelenos lifted motifs from the past that had ended less than fifty years before. The era of the missions and ranchos had lasted from only 1769 to 1848, but it provided a foundation on which to build both a cultural myth and a regional reality. This willingness to absorb diverse influences, to be open to new perceptions and to interpret history flexibly became hallmarks of southern California culture (and ultimately, Hollywood/movie culture). The fairs and parades were the first fanciful expressions of southern California's new culture of prosperity, optimism, beauty and whimsy. Although most of the visible signs of that era have been erased, paved over or forgotten, they are still visible on January 1 – and that spirit of openness has never truly vanished.

VICTORIA DAILEY is the author of the 2006 and 2007 delightfully complementary *Keepsakes: reproductions of 1896–1965 travel posters from southern California* (2006) and *northern California* (2007). The posters are taken from the author's collection.

——— Review ———

Beowulf, a graphic novel: part one. Translated from the Old English by Jonathan Fetter-Vorm. Art by Tom Biby and Jonathan Fetter-Vorm www.twofinechaps.com
\$35.00 (includes shipping and handling)

In early June 2006, before the Associates of the Stanford University Libraries, Jonathan Fetter-Vorm was awarded the inaugural Byra J. and William P. Wreden



Prize for Collecting Books and Related Materials by the Stanford University Libraries for his collection on graphic novels. In accepting the award, Jonathan mentioned the influence of Will Eisner, generally considered the father of the contemporary graphic novel, on his collecting interests. He also brought several books, including some by Eisner, from his collection to show and share with the Associates. What truly excited and captured everyone's interest, however, was when he showed those assembled the first advance copy of *Beowulf*, a graphic novel, created with his partner, Tom Biby. Associates clamored to see it, were thrilled by the art work and wanted to buy it; one enthusiastic member even offering five times the artists' intended selling price. Jonathan graciously invited those present to attend the formal publication party at Stanford the following week.

Last fall, a few weeks after being asked to write this review, a balloon appeared over my head, "Whoa, dude. What are your qualifications? Do you ever remember reading *Beowulf* and what do you know about graphic novels?" Scrolling into pre-history I remembered, even before I could read, looking at the Sunday color comic section and, get this history fans, listening to a radio program in which the comic art was described and the text read aloud for listeners. So I first fell under the spell of the sequential art of such classic comics as *Dick Tracy*, *Katzenjammer Kids*, *Prince Valiant* and others at an early age. Around the advanced age of seven I was given a monthly subscription to *Walt Disney Comics and Stories* which got

me started as a Disney collector. During the fifties I became entranced by the work of two British cartoonists, Rowland Emmet for his whimsical trains and Ronald Searle for his ever scheming students, the boy Molesworth, and the infamous girls of St. Trinian's. For a while, in the late sixties, I avidly pursued the work of some of the San Francisco psychedelic comic artists. Through the antiquarian book trade I was introduced to artist Lynd Ward's haunting, timeless and wordless 1930s woodcut novels. Lately, I've been drawn to graphic art used to interpret contemporary events, in Art Spiegelman's 2004 work, *In the Shadow of No Towers*, and, last year, in a graphic adaptation of the 9/11 commission report, but back to *Beowulf*.

Biby and Fetter-Vorm's work is a large format paper bound book of thirty-two pages illustrated in black and white and full color. Printed in an edition of 250 copies it contains a fine afterword explaining imagery and text incorporated in the work. Celtic and Viking influences appear in manuscript lettering and knotwork borders, even the influences of the Bayeux Tapestry are present; all are skillfully worked into the pictorial narrative.

Fetter-Vorm has provided his own translation and abridgement of the ancient orally transmitted epic poem to complement the illustrated narrative. One is tempted to compare it with Seamus Heaney's recent superb verse translation, but to do so one would miss the primacy of the picture story which the text supplements. Stanford Professor of English, George Brown, has opined that Fetter-Vorm's translation must be viewed from the perspective of a new generation as a fresh and contemporary exposition employing the growing *zeitgeist* of the graphic novel. From the earliest oral traditions to the present the story has been continually embellished, overlaid, reinterpreted and subject to a variety of influences.

In the first half of the book the art work appears in black and white, in its way a prologue, introducing Beowulf and bringing him to the Danish court of Hrothgar. It is only with the appearance of the monster Grendel that dark and sinister colors expand across the pages as the young warrior Beowulf is soon caught up and engaged in a bloody, terrific, terrifying battle with him. The first part concludes with Beowulf winning the glory of this epic encounter. The artists promise their readers two more installments to complete the story.

The artistic, dramatic and thrilling qualities of this work remind me of two different Japanese pictorial storytellers: Utagawa Kuniyoshi, whose masterful early nineteenth century colored wood block prints bring the classic story of the forty-

seven samurai, the *Chushingura*, alive, and Osamu Tezuka, whose 1980s eight volume epic black and white manga, *Buddha*, has been endlessly praised from the likes of Will Eisner to Tibetan Buddhist scholar, Robert Thurman, for turning ancient Buddhist wisdom into a riveting, page-turning popular work. *Beowulf*, a graphic novel, compared to these Japanese artists' work represents an auspicious and exciting debut for two talented young men.

BO WREDEN

——— *Serendipity* ———

We have been noticed at last! *The London Bankers' Gazette and Railway Monitor*, now known as *The Economist*, homed in on the cultured accent of our Executive Director. From this center of civilization, it discovered "steps from Union Square, the genteel reading room of the state's oldest bibliophilic group is nothing fancy, but there is always a sofa to sink into, and an interesting exhibit of some kind. Book lovers, including non-members, are welcome to come in and browse..." Stopping there, on that invitation, the Golden Gate Greeters sent by a tour, the first of many we hope.

In 2005, New York Public Library sold 19 paintings, led by Asher B. Durand's "Kindred Spirits" (1849), a major Hudson River School painting, and two Gilbert Stuart Paintings of George Washington after the library president declared, "We are not a museum." Alas, that same view surfaced in San Francisco.

On December 11, Monday, the University of San Francisco completed a stealth attack on aesthetics. Without notice, just after Thanksgiving the University anonymously consigned to Los Angeles auctioneers Bonhams & Butterfield a Maynard Dixon painting it owned. Through the years, many had admired "High Hills of the Tehachapi," which Dixon painted in 1936, in its place of honor in the Gleeson Library's Donohue Rare Book Room.

An auction catalogue illustration provided the university community with the first notice of the painting's disappearance. The pending sale dismayed and distressed loyal supporters of the University of San Francisco, but not even the content-challenged *Chronicle* would report it.

Although the painting brought \$900,000, like Peter before dawn, the University failed three tests. First, good institutions have established de-accessioning regulations, and follow them in a conscientious public manner. Second, as any auc-

tioneer knows, widespread publicity, not secrecy, brings the highest price. Third, most importantly, is aesthetics. Sitting in a library in the presence of a fine painting that interprets the Southern California landscape through the mind of a great Western artist is something that money cannot buy.

Art appreciation occurs on many levels, and knowledge always heightens appreciation. Over the holidays, we received an auspicious book, *Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art*. (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 2006; \$65 cloth; \$45 paper.) Author Terese Tse Bartholomew is curator of Chinese Decorative Art at the Asian Art Museum, and she features 140 items from the Avery Brundage Collection. Its 352 pages make it a long book for a short run exhibit that opened on October 7 and closed with the year on December 31, 2006.

We are clueless as to why our friends thought we might like it. Perhaps the huge asterisks marking passages in the preface remarking on aspects of the Chinese language are there to provide clues. It seems that many words share the same sounds and tones making Chinese an ideal language for punning. Decorative artists made the most of skillful world play.

Hidden meanings, an integral part of Chinese culture, have intrigued Bartholomew since she was a graduate student forty years ago. The Chinese believe being in proximity with auspicious wishes will assist them to come true. Artists, therefore, worked in four-character good luck sayings in clothing, porcelains, lacquer, metal, and jade work.

Meaning within these antique decorative arts hid especially from museum label-writers. In the late 1960s, as Bartholomew looked at the Avery Brundage Collection and museum exhibits elsewhere, she saw numerous auspicious pictorial punning rebuses. "The labels, unfortunately," she wrote, "were not enlightening;" they merely stated the obvious: 'Vase,' 'Plate with Fruit,' or 'Bowl with Flowers.' In frustration, Bartholomew exclaimed, they contained "not a word about the significance of the work itself."

We find this practice all too common. A label must entice, inform, and excite visitors. In history museums especially, an object is meaningless without context and interpretation. On line, we found where a New York museum placed a learned discussion explaining how to read a museum label.

The sample, a label for a real painting shown on the site, started off with the artist's name, his birth and death dates, title, in this case, "Floral Still Life, 1686,"

and type of artwork. The full description read, “Dutch painting.” Anything of significance about the artist and the work was brief.

Strangely, obvious or useless information received great detail. The section on medium or the materials the artist used stated, “Oil on canvas,” obvious. Dimensions, given both in inches and centimeters, also obvious. Revelation on how the museum acquired the painting ran for twenty-seven words, and its explanation took thirty-seven words. Perhaps this knowledge might be of interest at a benefactors’ gala, but certainly not to the casual visitor.

Last came the accession number, which, in this example, was “82.9.” Although brief on the caption, it required another thirty-seven word explanation to inform the reader of this online page that it was the ninth work the museum acquired in 1982. Whoopee! Museum visitors ALL demand to know when such an object that has been in this world already for three centuries entered a collection.

We call this method of alleged enlightenment and explanation an “Inventory Label.” Recall the scene from the 1981 Indiana Jones movie *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, where the crated Ark of the Covenant rolls into a huge government warehouse never to be found again. The information presented on this type of label is useful solely for finding an object in storage.

Inventory style labels may have merit for modern art museums where titles give no clues to a painting’s subject and composition materials are often doubtful. Otherwise, do not torture visitors.

Alas, even the Asian Art Museum Website currently does not comprehend Bartholomew’s message. Next to a written website description of her exhibit is a color photograph of a shallow Chinese plate with this caption: “Image: Plate with peach, 1662-1722, China. Porcelain with overglazed polychrome decoration-fencai. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B6oP8+.” Beginning, content, and end of explanation.

However, as item 7.44.10 (page 207) Bartholomew reveals that this peach containing two characters within makes a four-character auspicious saying, “May the immortal peach grant you ten thousand longevities forever limitless,” a sentiment reserved for the emperor. With words all about you in a museum, on the walls, as introductions, in labels, competing for your time and eyesight, which caption would you like to read?

Arcadia Publishing shows what may be done with captions. This Charleston,

South Carolina, firm has blanketed the United States with four thousand ubiquitous sepia-covered local histories. In the past six years, California has gained 400, including ones by past BCC vice president Claudine Chalmers (Mill Valley and Grass Valley and a forthcoming one on the French in San Francisco), Carol A. Jensen (her beloved Byron Hot Springs), and even this distracted scribbler (Wells Fargo). We are even able to deny that this is a “puff piece,” as the bank entered into a no-royalty agreement with Arcadia.

Authors write to formula: each book has 128 pages, and all chapters begin on the right page. Above all, they are picture-books, confined to 18,000 words with two illustrations per page. Cumulatively, captions carry the story.

Some authors, though, take a while to get up steam, and when they do, the crime would be to stop them. California historian Kevin Starr, Book Club member and recipient of the Oscar Lewis Award, is one of them. In recognition, Starr was one of ten on November 9 receiving the National Humanities Medal at the White House from President George W. Bush. Starr is indeed a star, and we are pleased to see this recognized nationally!

For those who do not wish to tackle his magisterial six volume *California Dream*, with the final volume on the way, there is *California*. It is a mere one volume, full of Starrisms. (New York: A Modern Library Chronicles Book, 2005; \$24.95 hb, \$14.95 paper). As we have also written a history of California, one a hundred pages shorter, we testify to Starr’s qualities of mass distillation of information, success in finding the most telling anecdote, and overwhelming overall eloquence. Starr is a pleasure to read as he paints the broad sweep of California history incorporating the most up-to-date scholarly theories.

In order is a star sampling: “Even a sympathetic observer,” Starr writes, “acknowledging the benevolent intention of the mission system, must see it by the standards of the twenty-first century, as a violent intrusion into the culture and human rights of indigenous peoples.” Starr’s pen portrait of César Chavez, which we have abbreviated here, impressed us. Chavez grew to be more than a shrewd labor organizer. He was “not a figure fully of this world,” Starr relates. “He was, rather, a kind of saint, bespeaking the essential dignity of labor.”

“Over the past 150 years,” Starr continues, “historians have interpreted the Gold Rush successively as a mid-Victorian epic of Anglo-Saxon progress (Herbert Howe Bancroft),” Starr states. He then concisely summarizes seven more notable

historians to end this Gold Rush comparison with “the perspective of young Turk New Historians—a nightmare of violence, lynch law, racism, genocide, xenophobia, class and sexual conflict, and brutal degradation of the environment.”

Starr concludes, “Each of these interpretations is true in its own way, but not the full truth,” for each generation finds in the Gold Rush “corroboration for contemporary concerns.” As our perceptive readers—all of you, have guessed, we are leading to a goal with these fulsome remarks on Starr’s expansive knowledge of California historians. Starr has promised the Book Club a manuscript this spring titled *Clio on the Coast: Writing California History through 1930*.

In comparison to a star however, we have a cosmic dust Quibble. Kevin Starr needs a better fact-checker. One sentence in an encomium to Chinese railroad workers is worth four fusses. Starr describes Chinese workers “lowering themselves in baskets down sheer cliffs to dig holes for dynamite out of solid rock, dying . . . day in, day out across six years, [and] in one case laying ten miles of track in a day...”

To wit: The first phrase is good for two fusses. Construction along the 1200 feet of Cape Horn was so normal as track crews cut into the slope that the civil engineers did not mention it in reports. The railroad drilled holes for weaker blasting powder, not dynamite, by double-jacking and not single-jacking. One man held the drilling steel and turned it ninety degrees between hammer blows from two others allowing the team to drill four feet in eight hours.

Furthermore, the laws of physics promulgated by Sir Isaac Newton destroy the fabrication about Chinese lowering themselves in baskets over Cape Horn to hammer with one hand and turn the drill with the other. Sit in a child’s swing, feet off the ground. You are the basketed Chinese single-jack driller. Have someone stand directly in front of you. They are the cliff. Push against them. Who moves backwards? You need solid footing to be “a steel-drivin’ man” like John Henry.

The next fuss regards Chinese dying “across six years” of construction: Starr above records that “in 1865, [Railroad construction boss Charles] Crocker hired fifty.” The railroads joined in May 1869. By the Old Math, that is four years and not six. The final fuss concerns record track-laying. George Kraus, in his classic *High Road to Promontory* (1969) pictures (251) the time sheet listing the names of the eight strong Irishmen who laid the ten miles of iron rails in a day. Enlist colleagues and friends as readers to ensure accuracy.

As we are writing a tome for the Book Club on San Franciscan Grafton Tyler

Brown's lithography, we were pleased to see two of his views included in Sally B. Woodbridge's *San Francisco Maps & Views* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc. 2006, \$50). The majority come from adopted San Franciscan David Rumsey's huge collection, viewable at www.davidrumsey.com. Noted collector and BCC member Warren Heckrotte supplied a Gold Rush one. It makes a nice fit for a future Club book on pre-Gold Rush California maps being shepherded by Marianne Hinckle of the Año Nuevo Press and her heel-nipping, type-setting, attack seals.

Rumsey, president of Cartography Associates, declares, "Maps are the narrative, with words acting as glosses on what the maps make vivid to us." Woodbridge adds a sprightly text elucidating both the map and the history of the city of San Francisco. Best of all, she does not stick to standard stuff. The first map shown mixes a detailed 1869 map of the developed eastern side of the peninsula with a 2000 satellite photograph of the now inhabited western side. Another map, drawn in 2005, shows how much of 1850s San Francisco was sand. One from 1864 shows public transportation revealing the growth of horse-car lines in the previous five years, while a map of the Bay Area Rapid Transit in 2005 complements it.

A fine reproduction of the Board of Supervisors' 1885 map of Chinatown is present, although without the left side key to the colors: General Chinese Occupancy, brownish-orange; Chinese Gambling Houses, pink; Chinese Prostitution, green; Chinese Opium Resorts, yellow; Chinese Joss Houses, red; and White Prostitution, blue. The report added, "The map and colors show only the first or street floor of Chinatown and the occupancy of same."

In lurid prose, San Francisco *Morning Call* police reporter Ernest C. Stock denounced the map on July 23, 1885, as inaccurate and sanitized. It did not show the "vice, corruption, and infamy" above and below the ground floors of places labeled "General Chinese Occupancy," such as merchants. The great fire of 1906 swept the area, revealing some of the underground tunnels.

Best of all, Woodbridge brings her work into the modern era, with maps detailing the Yerba Buena Redevelopment Area (2005), a Home Buyer's Reference Map for suitability (2004), and several three dimensional maps of the downtown (1998 and 2006).

Yet, in her appendix on map makers, when speaking of A.L. Bancroft & Co., Woodbridge states, "Judging from its output, the company was an important one, but this writer has found no biographic information on it." As Albert Little Ban-

croft ran the printing department for his brother's History Factory, John Walton Caughey's *Hubert Howe Bancroft* (1946) is a good starting point, with much detail on the printing and lithographic business.

Our point is not to ridicule Woodbridge with the obvious. She is a good historian. We bought the folio map book partly because her *John Galen Howard and the University of California* (2002) so impressed us. No one can know everything, nor are they expected to. However, all writers have learned friends. Put their expertise to work as fact-checkers. Insist on it.

Furthermore, we have heard tales of Book Club books being withdrawn just as binders sharpened their needles due to mis-spelling the author's name on the title page. Wheel-of-Fortune's Vanna White should have been on hand to supply map book printer Rizzoli with a second "d". For noted architectural historian Susan Woodbridge to not have a completed "bridge" in her own name must be embarrassing. DO NOT judge this book by its title page. Rizzoli produced a beautiful volume.

On December 19, 2006, printers to the Roxburghe and Book Clubs strutted their stuff. Yet, an unreasonable editor demands that our loquaciousness be curtailed. To even things up, therefore, we save remarks on alternate printers (we dare not say "odd") for next time.

Robin Heyeck is celebrating her namesake press's thirtieth birthday. In the beginning, she planned to do a book on paper marbling every ten years. *Marbling at the Heyeck Press* left Woodside in 1986 to be currently a \$400 to \$600 book. We can only imagine what *Adventures of a Marbler*, which appeared in January 2007 with 38 tipped-in samples will bring. If Heyeck does not lose all her marbles, we will expect her to be on schedule with the next in 2016.

Pat Reagh has done just pamphlets this past year, including a letter press catalogue for his gourmet bookselling friend Ben Kinmont, with recipes sprinkled through from the rare books being sold. As for all suggestions to cook the books, these should not be tried.

BCC member Gary E. Strong, the University Librarian for the University of California Los Angeles, hosts a series of lectures and has them printed. Reagh did one letterpress for our Beverly Hills QN-L author Victoria Dailey, which she presented on April 28, 2005. Way Down Under, the seasons are reversed, but not so far south only the alphabet is backward. How else to explain Dailey's title Z-A?

In answer, read the subtitle: *Jake Zeitlin, Merle Armitage & Los Angeles' Early Moderns*. Next, follow the title page into a lively read on artistic Angelenos from the 1920s through the 1970s. Like many, Dailey got her bookish start with Jake Zeitlin, while our bibliomania got a boost after winning a couple of the book collecting contests Zeitlin sponsored at the University of California, Riverside.

Reagh also makes magnetic bases for printers using polymer plates, and has a type foundry. Most captivating is where Pat is now at. "The 'At' @ sign used to be consigned to the smallest compartment in the job case," Reagh said. "Now with the internet, demand has boomed." Reagh sells boxes of Pat's Ats, or as depicted on the package "P@'s @s in sizes 6 through 12."

(Phone rings) "Where is Pat at?" "Pat is apt to be at casting Pat's Ats™ (@)." "So Pat is apt to be at an apt place for casting Pat's Ats™ (@), which is apt because that is where Pat's at, but if Pat is not at an apt place for casting "Pat's Ats" (@)", where apt to be Pat at?..." Reaghy, this might happen.

The Roxburghe meeting coincided with Greenwood Press printer Jack Stauffacher's 86th birthday, which he celebrated with his family. Every day Stauffacher rides to work on his bicycle from Tiburon to his forty-year-old office in the 1922 "Printers' Building" at 300 Broadway. On that portion of his progression by ferry, he keeps his mind nimble flashing the peace sign and arguing with Republicans. When no easy targets are to be found, Stauffacher relaxes with friends. Another such friendly gathering occurs every Friday meridian at 901 Columbus where a no-host open table offers lunch and good companionship.

It seems that the luncheon on December 15, did not follow ordinarily. A nameless instigator had contacted Aaron Peskin, President of the Board of Supervisors, and Stauffacher's district representative. Peskin, who has a love of history, proclaimed JACK WERNER STAUFFACHER DAY in San Francisco, "recognizing him as the last printer at 300 Broadway, and among the last 'men of metal' who has yet to print and publish many books." Among those volumes, Stauffacher is presently producing Bob Greenwood's bookselling memoirs of the Talisman Press for the Book Club. Roxburghe Master of the Press Bill Barlow remarked that Mr. Stauffacher was not here, but had the longest presentation. John McBride, above instigator and proclamation writer, did his subject justice. For Jack, no time is too long.

In Berkeley, Schoyer's Books, a twenty year institution in two cities, is no more. It passed with Marc Selvaggio's beloved wife and partner Donnis de Camp, who

lost a battle with cancer. Before going down with colors nailed to the mast and spirits high, de Camp asked that Selvaggio "continue in this profession we both loved." Only the Schoyer's name died. Marc Selvaggio, Bookseller, has arisen, full of vigor and catalogues.

We note that the American Dialect Society chose "Plutoed" as the word of the year. By an astronomical decision, our solar system contains only eight planets, leaving only a word to denote something demoted or devalued, or in a word, "dissed." With this, we will declare ourself "Plutoed" and desist this screed.

DR. ROBERT J. CHANDLER

— Southern California Bookish News —

Although the Internet now threatens to make the bookseller's catalogue an antediluvian artifact, a number of booksellers in southern California continue to issue catalogues, and several recent ones are worth remarking. Those readers who do not collect or care about modern firsts will probably not have heard of Mark Hime and Bibliotopos in Beverly Hills. Mark does catalogues only occasionally, but they are infamous for their irascibility and pull-no-punches prose. They are usually labeled on the title page "Warning Label: Catalogue with an Attitude," so the tender-hearted and the sentimental should probably not request his Catalogue 35, "The Tao of the Octopus." (You can't ask for it by e-mail, by the way. Mark apparently believes in modern technologies like the telephone but refuses to have a fax machine or an e-mail address.) Mark enjoys flailing away at pretension wherever it erupts in the book world (and it does everywhere, of course), so he will, for example, flip a finger at Melville scholarship in this way (annotating a copy of the first American edition of *Moby-Dick*, \$100,000): "In an ecological affront to every one of us, half a continent of trees have died to manufacture books analyzing *Moby-Dick*, all with enough hot air to float a Macy's parade." His annotation of a fine copy of Albert Camus' *La Chute* (1956, \$2,100) contains this sentence, chiding Monsieur Camus: "...life is just something you do when you can't sleep." Catalogue 35 has some remarkable books in it, including a first of *A Study in Scarlet* in wrappers (1888, \$265,000) and a nice copy of the 1936 Joyce's *Ulysses* with the (unmentioned) Eric Gill bow on the upper cover (\$50,000). Hidden at the end of Mark's description of a copy of the first edition of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is his Nicene Creed: "If you want to be happy for an hour, smoke some grass. If you want to be happy for

a month, fall in love. If you want to be happy forever, take up book collecting."

Gordon Hollis at Golden Legend, Inc., also in Beverly Hills, often does a Holiday List, and this year's contains his usual mix of theatre, dance, illustrated books and photography. The Rabelais illustrated by André Derain (1943, \$22,500) is a wonderful book, and an eighteenth-century drawing of a flutist by Johann-Philipp Haid (\$3,000) is unusual. Michael Thompson's recent list has, as always, one hundred varied books, among them Angelo Battaglini's *Dissertazione accademica sul commercio degli antichi e moderni librai* (1786, \$1,250), a book about bookselling, and the compelling Red Angel Press edition from 2000 of a story by Henry James, *Siena*, with a stand-up woodcut image of the city (\$750). Another annual holiday *omnium gatherum* comes from Heritage Book Shop, Inc., a beautifully illustrated catalogue you could almost give as a present to anyone who longs to own things like a Mendelssohn autographed musical quotation (\$10,000) or a Winnie the Pooh drawing (cagily not illustrated, \$60,000) but cannot afford the real objects. For those who drive Saturns instead of BMWs, an English Epictetus of 1694 seems more accessible (\$750). Ken Karmirole's recently issued science and medicine catalogue is full of rare and extraordinary books – a first edition of Vesalius's *Fabrica* (1543), a first of Ramelli's *La diverse et artificiose machine* (1588), and firsts of two books by Johannes Hevelius, his *Machinae caelestis* (1673) bound with his *Cometographia* (1688) – but I was also struck by two far less august but perhaps more charming books. Richard James Morrison was clearly a crank, as his *The Solar System As It Is, and Not As It Is Represented* (1857, \$250) seeks to reinstate the Ptolemaic view of the universe more than three hundred years after Copernicus. John Morphew's English translation of Claude Quillet's amusingly titled poem, *Cal-lipædiæ; Or, An Art How To Have Handsome Children* (1710, \$850) comes bound with his *Pædotrophix, Or The Art of Nursing and Breeding Up Children*, both subjects of continuing interest to all.

David Brass has also issued a holiday catalogue, his Catalogue 102 (really No. 2 as David Brass Rare Books), and it is, not surprisingly, full of children's books (Dulac, Rackham, Potter). He has two Winnie the Pooh drawings (\$25,000 and \$37,500, both illustrated), as well as a first edition of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964), which he cheerfully admits was published at \$3.95 (it is now \$6,500). A copy of Rolf Boldrewood's Australian crime novel *Robbery Under Arms* (1888, \$7,500) is attractive, and he also has (presumably the same copy as is in Bibliotopius Catalogue 35) an 1816 Mallory, *The History of the Renowned Prince Arthur* in

paper boards (\$4,500), more or less the earliest obtainable edition, the earlier ones being (to quote Mark Hime) “harder to find than Amelia Earhart.” Jeff Weber has done a series of recent catalogues offering books from the library of printer and animator Vance Gerry, as well as an unusual catalogue devoted to fore-edge paintings, the fifth such catalogue that Jeff has issued. Howard Rootenberg’s latest catalogue is devoted to literary works by doctors (“*Beyond Prescriptions: The Poetry and Literature of Physicians*”). There are large numbers of books in the catalogue (available on the Rootenberg website) by some of the obvious writers who had medical training, from Sir Thomas Browne to Robert Bridges, Arthur Conan Doyle, several Olivers (Goldsmith, Wendell Holmes, and St. John Gogarty), Somerset Maugham, Silas Weir Mitchell, and William Carlos Williams (my personal favorite). Among the completely obscure I noticed Frank Bullard’s *The Apistophilon: A Nemesis of Faith* (1899, \$65), alarmingly described as “a series of over 100 spiritual quatrains.”

From booksellers’ catalogues, I turn now to exhibitions. The Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai in Egypt was built in the sixth century C.E. and has been occupied ever since. Its library today contains some 3,300 manuscripts in eleven languages, the earliest of which dates to the fourth century. The Getty Museum is currently hosting an exhibition entitled “Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai” (it closes March 7), and although the show’s focus is on icons borrowed from St. Catherine’s, a few extraordinary manuscripts are included. (The Great Codex Sinaiticus, the oldest extant Greek Bible, now in the British Library and a key object in its permanent exhibition of treasures, belonged to St. Catherine’s until Constantine von Tischendorf “liberated” it in the nineteenth century. One of the essays in the catalogue for the Getty show refers quite rightly to “the depredations of Uspenskii and Tischendorf.”) There is a striking gospel book in Greek, with a full-page illumination showing St. Luke presenting his book to Christ, and, although visually less arresting, the show includes the earliest known Christian manuscript in Arabic, dated 860 C.E. (The latter, amazingly enough, was discovered at St. Catherine’s only in 1975 in a disused storeroom. Bless storerooms!) The catalogue for “Holy Image, Hallowed Ground” contains an entry on one of the most stunning of all the manuscripts at St. Catherine’s, the so-called Codex Aureus (c. 975-1000 C.E.), a book written entirely in Greek majuscules in gold ink. This treasure, alas, was not in the exhibition. Monks from St. Catherine’s have taken turns being at the icons exhibition at all times, and reportedly they even wanted

to sleep in the galleries. (The exhibition represents the first time that objects have ever been loaned from the monastery, and presumably their owners were worried about security.) Another Getty show, "The Gospels in Medieval Manuscript Illumination," extraordinary in its own way, was mainly drawn from the Museum's Ludwig Collection. It closed on January 7.

Several recent and current exhibitions in the greater Los Angeles area have focused on the book arts. At the Langson Library of the University of California, Irvine, Ryan Hildebrand of the Special Collections staff has put together an interesting and pleasingly didactic exhibition entitled "Picture This: Five Centuries of Book Illustration." Though not comprising quite the five hundred years of the title (the earliest book in the show is a costume book from 1590), the forty-six objects that are part of "Picture This" nicely instruct the viewer about all of the processes used to illustrate printed books: woodcuts, wood engravings, line and tonal engravings, lithographs, pochoir, silk screen, and modern technologies such as mimeograph and photocopy. Among many nice books I particularly liked a 1781 *Tentation de Saint Antoine* with engravings by François Roland Elluin after images by Antoine Borel; the quite extraordinary colored woodcut done by Ron Keller for the Red Angel Press edition of a Nathaniel Hawthorne story called *Sights From a Steeple* (1988); a marvelous chromolithograph for a "carpet" page from a Koran reproduced in *L'Ornement polychrome* (1869-73); and Ron King's ever popular *Turn Over Darling* (1990), with erotic images produced using bits of coat-hanger and pulp. "Picture This" may be seen until May.

At my own Clark Library, an exhibition curated by Jennifer Schaffner and entitled "Women of Letters" opened in early January and focuses on the work of a number of women printers and book artists from Southern California. The Women of Letters constituted themselves as a working group over twenty-five years ago, and the women involved include Carolee Campbell, Kitty Maryatt, Susan King (now in Kentucky), Robin Price (now in Connecticut), Bonnie Thompson Norman (now in Seattle), Nancy Turner, Jean Gillingwaters, Jill Littlewood, Marion Baker, Donna Westerman, Nancy Bloch, and Katherine Ng. Most of the work in the exhibition dates from the 1990s to the present. There are some wonderful letterpress books, including those of Carolee Campbell's Ninja Press (*The Intimate Stranger* by Breyten Breytenbach (2006)); Robin Price, Printer & Publisher (*Wherever I Looked* by Gary Young (1993) and *Language of Her Body* by Amy Bloom (2003)), and Kitty Marryat's Scripps College Press (*Nous tissons*, 2006).

There are also pieces which are more painterly than printerly, such as Marion Baker's *The Store: 5-10 & 25 Cents* (2001) and a collaboration between Jean Gillingwaters and Donna Westerman entitled *ch'anel* (2006). As usual with the avant-garde among book artists there are things one can only call *objets-livres*, examples of which include Bonnie Thompson Norman's sculptural *A Primer for Democracy* (2004) and her 2003 *Jack and Jill*. There is also Nancy Turner's girdle book (imagined both literally and figuratively). She has in fact produced a medieval girdle book, in which a book is attached to a kind of bag that can be hung on a belt. A second book is actually attached to a woman's latex girdle, proving once again, if proof were needed, that the cutting edge can be absolutely literal.

Claremont to the East of L. A. has been the center for two important book arts exhibitions recently, focusing together on Stéphane Mallarmé's text, *Un coup de dés n'abolira jamais le hasard* and its influence on book artists of the twentieth century. The first show, entitled "A Throw of the Dice: Variations on Mallarmé's Visual Poem," was mounted at the Clark Humanities Museum (no relation to the Clark Library) and consisted of eighteen books (some with multiple openings, as they were issued unbound). This exhibition recreates one shown in 2003 at UC Irvine, and is based on copies mostly owned by or donated to the University by Judd and Renée Riese Hubert. (Renée died in 2005, but Judd turned ninety on January 17 this year.) It begins with the Mallarmé poem as first printed in a London-based journal called *Cosmopolis* in 1897, and includes both trade editions of the poet's work and, more strikingly, illustrated editions in the grand tradition of the *livre de peinture*. The latter are amazing, from André Masson's surrealist doodlings in a 1961 edition to Ellsworth Kelly's lithographs for the Limited Editions Club edition of 1992, among others. The most recent version dates from 2004 and is elaborated by the Cuban artist Jorge Camacho, who has apparently woken up from a Mallarmé dream and scribbled words and shapes in a notebook without turning on his bedroom light. The fifth item in this show, the 1945 Pléiade edition of Mallarmé's works, ought perhaps to have been replaced with the more recent edition (1998-2003) edited by Bertrand Marchal, as the latter represents the most up-to-date scholarship on Mallarmé's *œuvre*. I also wondered why Brian Coffey's translation, described in the catalogue as "typographically, an undistinguished book" and having "no illustrations," was in the section of the exhibition specifically labeled "Fine Press Editions and Artists' Books." But overall this is a marvelous group of books handsomely exhibited.

The second exhibition, held at the Denison Library at Scripps College, is entitled "A Poetic Coup d'État: Mallarmé's Influence on Artists' Books." (Both exhibitions close on March 9.) This related show explores the ways in which Mallarmé's use of space and typography in his poem have affected the development both of literature and illustrated books in the period from the 1960s to the present. Often the influence is rather pale, except inasmuch as Mallarmé may have made it possible to do whatever one wants with words and images, and to treat the two as equals in every way. Kitty Maryatt's *Objects Are Closer Than They Appear/Look Yet Again* (2002) is visibly related to *Un coup de dés*, but Buzz Spector's *A Passage* (1994), while an interesting book-object, doesn't seem very Mallarméan except in a truly remote sense. All twenty-eight books are American, English or French (with the French books coming from the Judd Collection), and it is easy to imagine that Italian or German or Chilean books might have been used as well. I'm not quite sure why Julie Chen is represented by two "books" in the exhibition, since her work strikes me as completely unrelated to Mallarmé, but it was wonderful to see some great French works in the Ambroise Vollard tradition: texts by Rimbaud, Butor, and Ponge, brought vividly to new life by the artists John Crombie, Bertrand Dorny, and Jean Fautrier respectively. Walter Hamady (his *Gabberjab 6* is in the exhibition) also struck me as being out of his element here, but less familiar names, such as June Woodening and Mike Wagner, were a welcome part of this *fête mallarméienne*. An illustrated catalogue is available from either institution for the cost of shipping and handling. Its publication was supported by the Book Club.

Gary Strong, a member of the Club and the University Librarian at UCLA, has started a series of nicely printed pamphlets at the library. They are produced by Pat Reagh in editions of 1,000 copies and, to date, number two: a piece by Victoria Dailey entitled *From Z to A: Jake Zeitlin, Merle Armitage & Los Angeles' Early Moderns*, and a lecture by Judith Freeman called *The Real Long Goodbye: The Unconventional Marriage of Raymond and Cissy Chandler*. In the old days, such a series would have been expected and unremarkable, but few are the university librarians extant in these United States anymore who care a whit for letterpress printing, much less for spending a little portion of their funds on such a project. *Bravo* to Gary Strong and the UCLA Library.

BRUCE WHITEMAN

——— *Gifts and Acquisitions* ———

The Club has recently purchased the following new books *The S.P. Century*, edited by Scott-Martin Kosofsky. It is a wonderful History of the Society of Printers in Boston. This is very amazing organization with members such as D. B. Updike and W. A. Dwiggins and modern designers such as R.D. Stinehour. We are very fortunate such a literate history of the very important organization has been written for our delectation. The second book is *Edward Seymour & the Fancy Paper Company* by Sidney Berger, the history of the paper company in England which did marbled paper for endsheets in books. The copy includes specimens of the papers. Mr. Berger is a serious paper collector, and this, is the first serious study of the company, and uses primary sources to describe the activities of the company. Both the books are very useful additions to the club's library.

BARBARA JANE LAND

——— *New Dues News* ———

For the first time in almost twenty years, rising costs demand that the Book Club of California raise its dues. The new membership levels are as follows:

Regular membership, \$75. *Sustaining membership*, \$100. *Patrons will remain at \$150*. For tax records, members may claim a deduction of \$10 from a regular membership, \$35 from the sustaining level, and \$95 as a patron.

Your dues pay for the splendid fine printing collectibles you receive: *The Quarterly News-Letter*, special announcement cards, and the annual *Keepsake*.

Other benefits – hospitality of the Club Rooms; the library of western history and fine printing; exhibitions; lecture series; and visiting privileges to two dozen bibliophilic organizations, including the famed Grolier and Rowfant Clubs – come from income provided by the Book Club's expertly-managed portfolio. Our unparalleled publishing program is self-supporting.

For questions please call or write: Lucy Rodgers Cohen, Executive Director, (415) 781-7532; lucyrcohen@bccbooks.org.

Kathleen Burch,
Chair, Membership Committee

Dr. Robert Chandler,
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Holly Arnold Kinney assumes her father's regular membership

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Newly Offered Books from Personal Libraries at Every Auction



If you're a collector of unusual books and manuscripts you'll appreciate the PBA Galleries' catalogues as a source of current offerings and prices. Recent auctions have included the sale of maps and atlases from the Ernst W. Gerber collection, the Jeffrey Norton 4000-volume library of fishing books, a partnership auction of golf books with the United States Golf Association, the Arthur M. Ellis collection of early books, manuscripts and fine printing, the Christopher Buckley Jr. library of fine books, sets and bindings, medical books from the library of the late Roy C. Selby, and autographs and manuscripts from the collection of Moya Olsen Lear (wife of pioneer aviator William P. Lear).

As always you are welcome to view the auction and bid online with Real Time Bidder. On the day of the auction please click on the Real Time Bidder link at the PBA Galleries' website.

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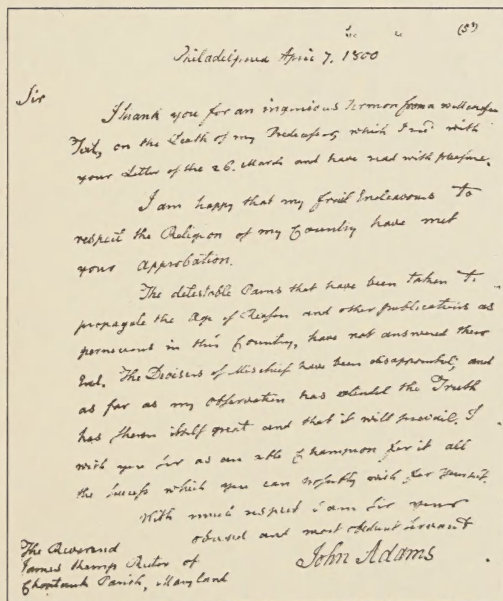
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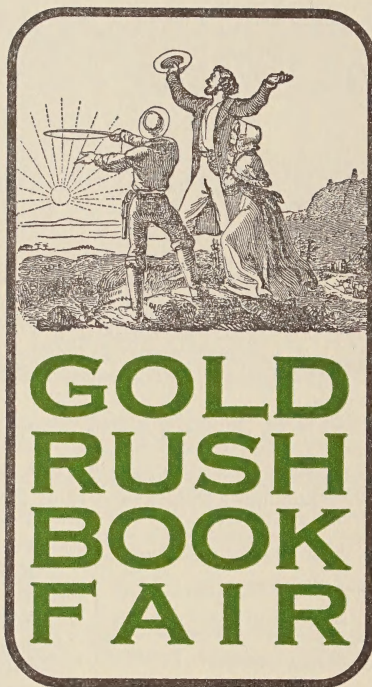


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